



Remembering Those Who Sacrificed

By U.S. Sen. John Cornyn

Each year, on Memorial Day we stop to remember all Americans who have served our nation and made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of liberty. We owe each of those men and women a debt that can never be repaid.

Those fallen heroes saw a dark cloud threatening our country, and each answered the call of duty. Each gave up a life of promise and hope so that others would continue to live in freedom. Their courage and sacrifice should never be forgotten.

The root values behind Memorial Day run deep in Texas. Our state was founded by frontiersmen and pioneers willing to risk everything to throw off tyranny. Hundreds died in the struggle, and their names are honored still.

Texans have always stepped forward when duty calls. Today, the world knows that “Texas defends America.” One in ten American military personnel call Texas home. We value service, and we appreciate those who sacrifice, so selflessly, for us.

Again this year, our nation is at war as Memorial Day approaches. Like many of our national conflicts, the war on terror is controversial, and has its domestic critics. These critics are exercising their right to dissent, and to free speech, that have been safeguarded by the sacrifices of generations of patriots.

Teddy Roosevelt, in a 1910 speech, noted history’s preference for those who pursue a noble goal, in spite of critical opposition. He said that those who make a difference are not the negative voices from the sidelines, but instead are the ones who place themselves on the line.

“The credit belongs to the man who ... at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat,” Roosevelt said.

Most Texans I’ve met—regardless of their opinion on our involvement in the Middle East—do not count themselves among the critics. Instead, they properly support our military, those on the front lines, and honor the sacrifices they have made.

The recognition is seen in countless ways, as notable as the yellow ribbon magnet on the back bumper or trunk of so many cars and trucks on Texas roads. Many military enlistees report when they wear their uniform, or their camouflage, that Texans of all types walk up and say, “Thank you for your service.”

Volunteers from all over Texas have organized efforts to support military personnel and their families, from sending packages overseas to helping out with extraordinary expenses.

But unlike World War II, when some necessities were rationed and virtually everyone went to work, few sacrifices by civilians have been necessary in the war on terror. The economy is booming, and goods are plentiful. The burden of providing our defense is falling narrowly—on those who volunteer to serve, and their families.

On Memorial Day, America carries out its duty to remember those who have lost their lives for the cause of freedom and the security of our country.

This year, I hope we will also make an effort to consider how we can honor those who are serving, as well as those who have served. We can do so by volunteering our time and resources to one of countless organizations, from the USO to veterans groups, to ad hoc efforts, supporting our troops.

We can all make sacrifices, even in small ways, and also remember those fallen heroes in our prayers.

Sen. Cornyn serves on the Armed Services, Judiciary and Budget Committees. In addition, he is Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Ethics. He serves as the top Republican on the Judiciary Committee’s Immigration, Border Security and Refugees subcommittee and the Armed Services Committee’s Airland subcommittee. Cornyn served previously as Texas Attorney General, Texas Supreme Court Justice and Bexar County District Judge. For Sen. Cornyn’s previous Texas Times columns: www.cornyn.senate.gov/column